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ANTI-SEMITISM IN FRANCE AS VIEWED BY COMMUNIST-ORIENTED
NEWSPAPERS IN THE DIASPORA

[Comment: Despite recent widely publicized charges of anti-Semitism against the USSR and countries within the Soviet orbit, Communist or Communist-oriented newspapers published in Budapest, New York, Paris, Sofia, and Warsaw between 13 December 1951 and 12 November 1952 have constantly criticized anti-Semitic manifestations in France and have appealed for joint action of all "democratic" organizations in France and other countries to combat "Hitlerite fascist anti-Semitic" propaganda, which, according to these papers, threatens not only Jews but also France, democracy, and peace as well. This report presents reactions to anti-Semitism as published in these newspapers during the above-mentioned dates.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources.]

General Anti-Semitic Manifestations

A news release captioned "The Leprosy of Anti-Semitism," which appeared on the front page of the 13 December 1951 issue of the Hungarian-language Jewish Communist newspaper of Budapest, Uj Elet, highly praised the work of the [French-Jewish pro-Communist] MRAP (Mouvement contre le Racisme, l'Anti-semitisme et pour la Paix, Movement Against Racism, Anti-Semitism, and for Peace) for having effectively reported anti-Semitic outbreaks in Paris and Marseilles through its organ, Droit et Liberte. According to Uj Elet, an article by Charles Payan, secretary general of the MRAP, which appeared in Droit et Liberte, pointed out that the prevailing anti-Semitic symptoms in France had been instrumental in creating so-called "anti-racism days" throughout the country. According to Uj Elet, the MRAP-official had asserted that, on these days, meetings would be held in every part of France in protest not only against anti-Semitic provocations but also against colonial oppression.

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Uj Elet then published part of the resolutions passed by the trade unions of Bouches-du-Rhone at their 31st congress, as a result of the anti-Semitic provocations in Marseilles, as follows:

"The 31st congress learns with deepest indignation that the French Nazis in Marseilles have stigmatized the memory of the dead of the resistance movement and of the crematories and called on the French people to boycott Jewish shops.

"We are in full solidarity with the Jewish masses of Marseilles and France, who suffered so horribly during the Nazi occupation and actively contributed to the liberation of our country on the side of the resistance.

"The new action of the fascists has been encouraged to a great extent by the fact that government circles have made concessions to the traitors, collaborators, inspectors of death camps, and executors of patriots who belong to the enemies of France.

"We protest against permitting them to celebrate in the very heart of Paris a requiem in memory of the traitor Petain."

The article concluded that the above-mentioned resolution indicated that those who unite in the cause of the fight against anti-Semitism with the support of the most progressive movements are in the right and that the working classes of France have to identify themselves with the fight against anti-Semitism.(1)

On 20 August 1952, G. Koenig editorialized in the Paris Yiddish-language pro-Communist Naje Presse that it behooves the Jewish community of France to fight against anti-Semitism, since it not only slanders the memory of thousands of Jewish martyrs who lost their lives in battle and as members of the maquis but also jeopardizes the lives of Jewish children who are growing up in France.(2)

Fourth National Day of the MRAP

On 28 April 1952, A. Yudin [Yiddish approximation from French] discussed in the Naje Presse the Fourth National Day to be held in Paris on 18 May 1952 under the sponsorship of the MRAP, the purpose of which, he declared, was to establish a united front against racism, anti-Semitism, and for peace.

He declared further that the 1952 National Day will be of more importance than the three previous National Days, because many Nazi collaborators have been freed from prison, and a "French anti-Semitic movement" in Lyon actually called for pogroms for the first time in the history of France.

He emphasized that this event will give the most prominent French personalities an opportunity to combine forces throughout France in combating anti-Semitic propaganda, which not only threatens the Jews, but also the Republic of France, democracy, and peace.

Yudin appealed to the Jewish masses who, he claimed, are hit most by the anti-Semitic agitation in France, to be the first to join the fight against racism and anti-Semitism. He opined that no honest Zionist and Jewish organization, regardless of political leaning, should abstain from participation in this "anti-racism day."(3)

On the occasion of the Fourth National Day of the MRAP, which was to be held in Paris, L'Humanite, French Communist Party organ, on 16 May 1952 published in its entirety a letter by Rosalie MacGee, wife of Negro Willie MacGee, who was electrocuted in early 1951, addressed to the MRAP.

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Mrs MacGee's letter, in part, read as follows:

"My children and I will never forget the magnificent efforts by all the democrats of France to save my innocent husband. Moreover, we will not forget that the Assemblée de l'Union Française (Assembly of the French Union), on the morning of my misfortune, observed a minute of silence in memory of my well-liked husband, which demonstrates to the entire world that the people of France disapproved of this barbarous execution.

"I will speak and fight everywhere to stop the racist policy applied against my people by the US government, until peace will be assured to men, women, and children of all colors in the world.

"I will join the fight to revenge the murder of Willie MacGee, the fight for advancement of all men to freedom and democracy.

"My best wishes for the success of your Fourth National Day."(4)

On 17 May 1952, L'Humanite published the following list of French notables from all parts of France who had evinced interest in the Fourth National Day of the MRAP in Paris and had promised to attend this affair:

Attorney General Mornet; Justin Godart, former minister; Pastor Roser; Pastor Westphal; Pastor Vienney; Leon-Lyon Caen, president of the Cour de Cassation (Supreme Court of Appeals); Chief Rabbi Bauer; Professor Weil-Halle; Chief Rabbi Fuks /Fuchs ?/; Chief Rabbi Schilli /Schiller ?/; Rabbi Zaoui /Zavi ?/; Father Chenu; Father Berger; Father Faidherbe; General Petit; General Le Corguille; General Weiller; Volvey, president of UFAC (Union Française des Associations des Combattants, French Union of Veterans' Associations) of the Seine; Pierre Cot, deputy, member of the Conseil Mondial de la Paix (World Peace Council); Charles Serre, former deputy vice-president of FNDIRP (Federation Nationale des Deportés et Internes de la Resistance des Patriotes, National Federation of Deportees and Internees of the Resistance of Patriots); and Claude Aveline, Edmond Fleg, Francis Jourdain, Andre Spire, J.-J. Bernard, Louis-Martin Chauffier, Henri Hertz, and Pierre Paraf, writers.

Gustave Cohen, honorary professor at the Sorbonne; Madame Etienne Nouveau, president of the Federation des Amputés (Federation of Amputees); Henri Laugier, Marcel Prenant, Ernest Kahane, Evry Schatzman, Maurice Boucher, professors of the University of Paris; Emile Kahn, secretary general of the Ligue des Droits de l'Homme (League of Human Rights); Jacques Marion, secretary of the Confederation Generale du Travail (General Federation of Labor); Professor Jacques Hadamard; Father Boulrier; Madame Eugenie Cotton; president of the Federation Democratique Internationale des Femmes (International Democratic Federation of Women); Florimond Bonte of Paris; Alain Le Leap, secretary general of the Confederation Generale du Travail; Professor Jeanne Levy; Pierre Laroche, scenario-writer; Pierre Loewel; Micheline Presle, actress; and Jean-François Laglenne, president of the Union des Arts Plastiques (Union of Plastic Arts)."(5)

On 2 July 1952, Eyveyski Vesti, Jewish Communist Bulgarian-language newspaper of Sofia, published an article by I. Bekhar on the proceedings of the Fourth National Day of the MRAP, which was held in Paris on 18 May 1952. Highlights of this article follow.

The MRAP's Fourth National Day against racism, Anti-Semitism, and for peace was attended by more than 2,000 delegates from all sections of France. The proceedings were international in tone. Greetings were read from the Israeli Committee for Peace, the British Peace Movement, the Hamburg Committee for Peace, the Central Committee of the Anti-Fascist Resistance Organization in West Germany,

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the Peace Committee of Morocco, the League of Fighters for Freedom in Poland, the Rabbinical Council of Budapest, the Jewish Democratic Committee of the Rumanian People's Republic, the Central Committee of the General Confederation of Labor of the Rumanian People's Republic, and others.

Florimond Bonte, speaking in the name of the French Communist Party, assailed the policies of the French government which, he declared, support the growth of Hitlerism in West Germany. He also described the anti-Semitic manifestations in Lille, Paris, and Lyon which, he asserted, were being effectively counteracted by the united strength of the French democratic and antifascist forces. Another speaker, Etienne Nouveau, a Paris attorney, also stated that anti-Semitic propaganda and manifestations are again flourishing in France and added that this is not surprising, since the French government itself is aiding the arming of the neo-Hitlerites in West Germany. Other speakers included Father Berger, Professor Jacques Hadamard, Dr Pierre Henri Laugier; Claude Aveline and Pierre Paraf, writers; Leon Kartune /Bulgarian approximation from French/ pianist; and more than 200 others.

The main report of the meeting was read by Charles Payan, secretary-general of the MRAP, who pointed out that the Jews are being blamed for the current economic crisis in France, a well-known Hitlerite technique, and that anti-Semitic propaganda has appeared abundantly in France in the form of newspapers, pamphlets, and brochures.(6)

Charles Maurras, anti-Semite

/Maurras is reported to have died in November 1952, according to the New York Congress Weekly of 24 November./

An article datelined Paris, which appeared in the New York Yiddish-language pro-Communist Morning Freiheit of 3 July 1952, pointed out that Charles Maurras, anti-Semitic fascist leader /who was released from prison in May 1952 because of old age and ill health (he was 84 years old), according to Naje Presse of 1 August 1952/ had published in his newspaper Aspects de la France that the Vichy laws should be re-established and the Jews made to give up their possessions. According to the Morning Freiheit, he declared that the program of the fascists stipulates victory of the National Socialist (Nazi) revolution, the abrupt elimination of the pernicious influence of the "Jewish Internationale" in the political life of the Aryan world, and the eradication of the liberal bourgeoisie, as well as Marxism in any form.

According to this article, Jewish circles in Paris asserted that Maurras' declaration coincides literally with the Hitler program and constitutes an appeal for the elimination of the Jews, the Communists, and all the progressive and liberal elements in France.(7)

An article entitled "Paris Tribunal Demands Legal Investigation of Charles Maurras for Anti-Semitic Agitation and for Defending Nazi Activity" was prominently featured in Naje Presse of 1 August 1952. The article asserted in effect:

The Seine tribunal officially announced that Charles Maurras, anti-Semite and traitor, will have to stand investigation on the charges of "slander against a racial group and apology for the crimes perpetrated during the German occupation by the Germans and their French collaborators." It has been reported, the article stated, that Barres /Yiddish approximation from French/, the investigating judge, will not call Maurras to court but will let him appear before an investigating committee because of his advanced age.

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This announcement, the article noted, should certainly give satisfaction to all Jews and democratic circles and marks the initial success achieved by Jewish campaigners against the anti-Semitic agitation of Maurras.(8)

In an editorial which appeared in Naje Presse of 4 August 1952, A. Yudin praised the MRAP and the Comite d'Action de la Resistance (Action Committee of the Resistance Movement) for having brought pressure to bear on public opinion to the extent that a tribunal ordered the investigation of Charles Maurras for anti-Semitic activities. However, Yudin criticized French-Jewish organizations such as the Federation des Societes Juives (Federation of Jewish Societies) and the Alliance Israelite Universelle (Universal Jewish Alliance) for failing to answer the call of the MRAP to join the fight against Maurras and for having adopted their prewar policy of nonintervention in anti-Semitic controversies. Yudin pointed out that the pending investigation of Maurras did not necessarily mean a court trial and urged all French Jewish organizations to unite in the fight against Maurras so as to transform this investigation into a legal suit and thus bring about the punishment he justly deserved. Yudin concluded that the case of Maurras can serve to demonstrate that it is possible to fight anti-Semitic attacks but that the results of such a counterattack depend on how effectively the action is carried out and whether it is done jointly.(9)

G. Koenig, in an editorial which appeared in Naje Presse on 12 August 1952, expressed alarm at the recent anti-Semitic outbursts in Lyon and the anti-Semitic meetings held in Paris and Lille.

He claimed that these manifestations were the result of vicious anti-Jewish propaganda, which was published by Charles Maurras in Aspects de la France and of other anti-Semitic articles which appeared in the Paris newspaper Rivarol.

Koenig pointed out that French democratic and resistance organizations, led by the MRAP, had been fighting this new wave of anti-Semitism in France with some success, but that still more had to be done. Koenig also asserted that anti-Semitism should be unmasked as an instrument of fifth columnists.(10)

In another editorial which appeared in the 20 August 1952 issue of the Naje Presse, G. Koenig attacked the anti-Semitic methods used by Charles Maurras. Koenig wrote the following, among other things:

"When accused of anti-Semitism, Maurras defended himself by declaring that he was an 'innocent victim' of 'Jewish racism', i.e., he was a victim of Jewish 'terror and atrocity.' In attacking the Communist publication La Voie de Peuple for an article on his anti-Semitic activity, Maurras came out with the statement that such a systematic approach could only have come from a Jew, that is, a 'Jewish Bolshevik.' Maurras also stated that he did not want to send Jews to the crematoriums (he did that during the German occupation by his anti-Jewish denunciations), that all he wanted was an 'anti-Semitic government', and that although he screamed 'down with the Jews', he was willing to make an exception for 'high-standard Jews' [sarcastic]. Maurras also pointed out in the Aspects de la France: 'Anti-Semitism agrees with the highest tradition of Christianity (the Spanish inquisition, for example?) and is formally approved by the Vatican.' Now, Maurras demands that the Jews in France, who suffered so much under Hitler and the Vichy regime, again be subjected to the same type of anti-Semitism."(2)

Anti-Semitic Propaganda in Leaflet Form

An article datelined Paris which appeared in the Warsaw Yiddish-language Folks-Shtyme of 12 November 1952 asserted that Jewish merchants in Saint-Ouen, France, had been greatly aroused recently as a result of anti-Semitic propaganda being disseminated in leaflet form among the non-Jewish merchants in that town.

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It concluded that this propaganda, which, it said, consisted of fascist-type literature signed by Einar Aberg, anti-Semite of Sweden, is being conducted by an influential international organization. The article declared that this propaganda brands the murder of 6 million Jews by the Nazis as a lie and accuses the Jews not only of backing Communism, which is a crime against nations, but also of being responsible for all the hardships of mankind, including the world wars. This literature, stated the article, demanded that the Jews be isolated in their country of residence and their citizenship taken away from them.(11)

In an article, entitled "Ugly Anti-Semitic Leaflets Disseminated in Saint-Ouen," which appeared in the Naje Presse of 3 November 1952, A. Tsittrin [Yiddish approximation from French] also described the above-mentioned leaflet propaganda. A highlight of this article was the reproduction of one of the anti-Semitic leaflets, given below in English [from the French]:

COMMUNISM IS A CRIME AGAINST THE STATE

Behind Communism Is the Jew

For the NATIVE LAND - Against JUDAISM

Anti-Semitism is neither a doctrine of persecution nor a doctrine of hate against the Jews.

Anti-Semitism is the legitimate defense of individuals and nations.



Einar Aberg, Norrviken, September 1952

Also reproduced in connection with this article was a propaganda leaflet consisting of a section of the anti-Semitic Paris newspaper Rivarol, given below in English [from the French]:

R I V A R O L

354 rue Saint-Honore, Paris, Telephone: Opera 19-94

18. 1. 1952

Anti-Semites (Nationalists) of all Countries, Unite!

By Einar Aberg, Norrviken, Sweden

Tsittrin pointed out that the editorial address and telephone number of Rivarol are apparently given to gain new subscribers.

In his article, Tsittrin asserted further that other leaflets bearing the following inscriptions were also distributed in Saint-Ouen: "Jews control the gold reserves of the world." "Their money madness impels Jews to provoke world wars." "In order to rule, Jews want nations to destroy themselves." "Jews engage in warmongering."(12)

In a follow-up article, which appeared in Naje Presse of 4 November 1952, Tsittrin asserted that the anti-Semitic leaflets being sent to French retailers in Saint-Ouen have caused great excitement among the Jewish population in France, especially among the merchants of Saint-Ouen.

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Tsitritin pointed out that, according to Jewish merchants, this new manifestation marks a renewal of the criminal activity of Vichy times. One Jewish merchant, he declared, considers it no accident that this ugly anti-Semitic propaganda occurs at a time when retailers are dissatisfied, earn little, pay enormous taxes, and find their very existence threatened. According to Tsitritin, this Jewish merchant feels that such action is merely an attempt to blame the Jews for all these difficulties. Another Jewish retailer, Tsitritin continued, felt that this propaganda is not surprising since so many Nazis and Jew haters have been released from jail. Still another merchant, he wrote, declared that there is only one solution, that is, a joint action of Jewish merchants, together with other French associations, against such despicable propaganda.

Then Tsitritin pointed out that the anti-Semitic propaganda consists of slogans compiled by the editorial staffs of anti-Jewish newspapers in France, whose appearance, he claimed, constitutes a permanent danger to democracy in general and to Jews in particular. As an example of these slogans he quoted, among others, the following extracts from Aspects de la France and Rivarol: "International Jewry will plunge Europe into war." "Jews are war criminals; this is not political propaganda but the unadulterated truth." "The time has come for action." And again, "Anti-Semites (Nationalists) of all countries, unite!"

Tsitritin further maintained that the anti-Semites, under the sponsorship of Wall Street billionaires, are forming an international organization to carry through to completion the unfinished work of Hitler.

Tsitritin concluded, that in view of the danger to Jews, it is readily understandable when a Jew cries out: "Let us unite as Communists, Zionists, socialists, believers, and nonbelievers alike. Let us join hands with the democratic forces in the country and never allow the horrible crimes of the recent past to be renewed." (13)

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1. Budapest, Uj Elet, 13 Dec 51
2. Paris, Naje Presse, 20 Aug 52
3. Ibid., 28 Apr 52
4. Paris, L'Humanite, 16 May 52
5. Ibid., 17 May 52
6. Sofia, Evreyski Vesti, 2 Jul 52
7. New York, Morning Freiheit, 3 Jul 52
8. Paris, Naje Presse, 1 Aug 52
9. Ibid., 4 Aug 52
10. Ibid., 12 Aug 52
11. Warsaw, Folks-Sztyme, 12 Nov 52
12. Paris, Naje Presse, 3 Nov 52
13. Ibid., 4 Nov 52

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